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AND FORESTRY

BANKING, HOUSING,  
AND URBAN AFFAIRS

FINANCE

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510 - 3505

June 28, 2019

Mr. Steve Easterbrook  
Chief Executive Officer  
McDonald's Corporation  
110 N. Carpenter Street  
One McDonald's Plaza  
Chicago, IL 60607

Dear Mr. Easterbrook:

We are writing out of great concern that McDonald's workers routinely experience workplace violence. Your company is obligated to provide every employee who wears a McDonald's uniform a workplace free from threats, harassment, and assaults. We urge you to immediately adopt a comprehensive action plan to keep your workers safe, regardless if they work at corporate-owned or franchise restaurants.

According to a recent report published by the National Employment Law Project<sup>1</sup> (NELP), McDonald's employees have been subjected to more than 700 incidents of workplace violence in the last three years. NELP analyzed incidences that were covered in the news, and, because only a fraction get reported to the police and by the media, the total number of assaults against McDonald's workers is higher. These incidents included shootings, robberies, sexual assaults, battery, and other types of abuse. Guns were involved in 519 attacks, and 288 of the violent incidents occurred between 10pm and 4am. Two-hundred and eighty-one of the attacks resulted in at least one physical injury, and someone died in 86 of the incidents. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act) requires employers to provide their employees with working conditions that are free of known serious dangers. Clearly McDonald's is not meeting this requirement.

This pattern of violence against McDonald's workers is persistent and unacceptable, and immediate steps must be taken by McDonald's to keep these employees safe. These actions include training workers and store managers on how to follow safety protocols when violent attacks occur. We note that you have announced your intention to conduct safety training but only at the restaurants owned by McDonald's corporation. Given that 95 percent of McDonald's restaurants are independently owned, this action falls far short of the steps needed to keep all McDonald's workers safe. McDonald's must also actively encourage workers to call 911 whenever they feel unsafe. Reports that managers have discouraged outreach to emergency personnel are despicable. In addition, the company should consider reducing its hours, which are

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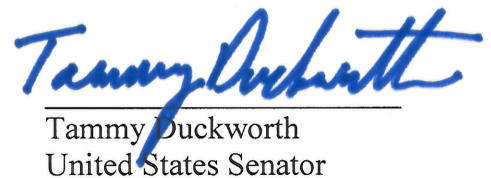
<sup>1</sup> Deborah Berkowitz, *Behind the Arches: How McDonald's Fails to Protect Workers From Workplace Violence*, National Employment Law Project (May 2019). <https://www.nelp.org/wp-content/uploads/Behind-the-Arches-McDonalds-Workplace-Violence.pdf>.

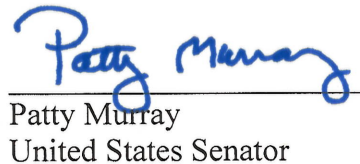
the longest in the fast-food sector and directly connected to the incidences of violence at your restaurants. These are just some of the steps the company must take to protect employees at all of its restaurant locations.

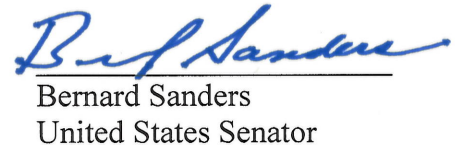
The company's response to workers' safety threats has been inadequate to date. Failure to take more aggressive action to keep all McDonald's workers safe puts them at risk. Perpetrators of these threats do not distinguish between corporate-owned or franchise McDonald's, nor should your efforts to promote workplace safety. We ask you to respond by July 19, 2019 with a detailed accounting of the steps McDonald's is taking at all 14,000 restaurant locations to keep your workers safe.

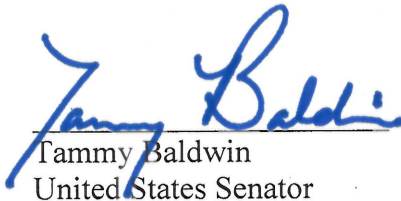
Sincerely,

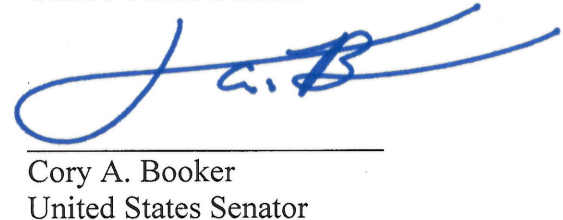
  
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

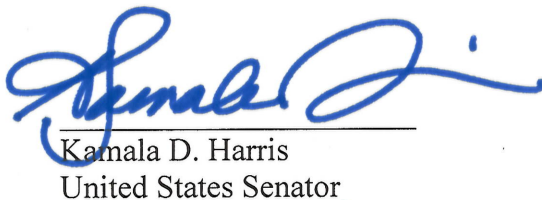
  
Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

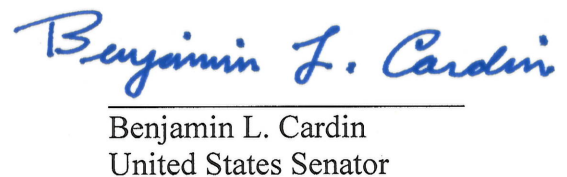
  
Patty Murray  
United States Senator

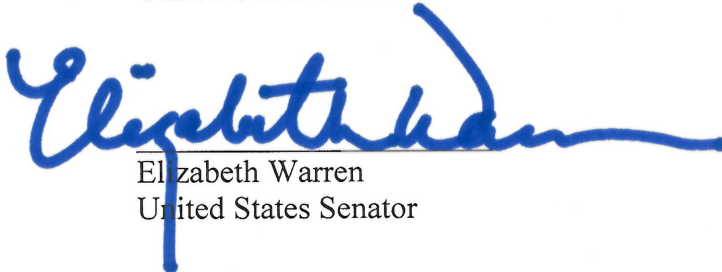
  
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

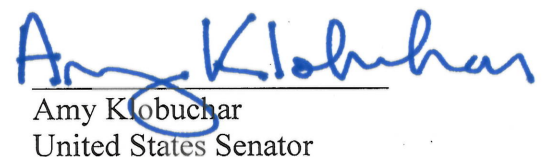
  
Tammy Baldwin  
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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

  
Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator

  
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

  
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

  
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator